

KAROECHO GENERAL MEETING MINUTES – 13 JAN 2020

Attendees:

KN6BVF
KJ6WSS
KK6ZPM
KM6LJB
K6KOP
KM6HFT
KE6BEE
KK6RED
AC6ZF
KN6BUY
KM6UBY
KN6CMR
KN6CMP
KK6GIO
KJ6SWK
KJ6AAT
KK6NDF

Meeting began with introductions around the table, then approval of the December minutes and the January Agenda. Larry Vanselow reminded all that this month is when our membership dues need to be paid - \$30 for single memberships, \$40 for family.

Training and demonstrations

The training/demos were presented by Jay Fenton KJ6WSS. There were two major elements- the first being the demo of his revised version of the portable communication station. The new version is reduced in size and weight and is easier for a single person to handle – but retains the same capabilities as the original unit.

The second portion of the demo was showing a variety of ham-made field usable antennas for general dual band (and GMRS) radios. These antennas are made of a combination of commercial units - Tram Diamond etc, coupled with pole, extensions and hardware that can be acquired locally at hardware stores and coupled in ways that makes them easily portable, readily assembled and erected and usable for a variety of radio situations and locations. One useful version was how to construct an extendable long length antenna with a mount that allows rotation of the antenna with extended pole

from vertical to horizontal – allowing the operator to access the upper part of the antenna by a simple 90 degree rotation whereby repairs or changes can be made, and then antenna rotated back to vertical and immediately ready to operate. Jay also had videos and photos showing examples of where he could install and communicate with multiple versions of these antennas.

Another element of this session Jay introduced cross band repeater function and dual watch capability of some radios. A warning was given about the inadvertent use of stun/kill options features on radios. Restoring the use of the radio after activating this feature generally requires expert assistance.

Outreach and Recruiting

Annette discussed the creation of a modified one page flyer – with new layout which she is working on with Rob. When ready we will print a substantial number and distribute these to new radio folks.

We are also going to publicize the Feb 29 FRS/GMRS radio training session in both El Cerrito and Kensington monthly publications. We also will be asking the CERT ACs to publicize/encourage their members to attend.

Howdy/Annette/Rob have agreed to try to reach out to the 170 individuals who in the CERT survey done in December responded yes to the question – are you interested in learning more about the use of radio in an emergency. A surprisingly large percentage of all responders answered this positively.

Training and operations

As mentioned in the section above we have not just one but two radio training sessions upcoming. The FRS/GMRS introduction and training is aimed at getting residents aware of and committed to the use of these short range radios in their local organized blocks. In addition to this Howdy has announced that the next semi annual KAROECHO SET is scheduled for Saturday, March 14. Some new elements that he may introduce is to get new volunteers to serve as net Control and at the EC EOC. Past SET have relied on just 2 or 3 folks and we need a broader set of EOC capable controllers. In addition, another possible change is to task some of the radio operators to make a significant location change during the SET – to reflect the possibility that events may occur during a real disaster to make the initial transmission site unusable, and require the operators to move

to a different location.

We also will try a different debrief format – given that the large attendance and the noisy location for our last SET indicates we should consider some differences – trying to do the debriefs in small separate groups, and maybe have these focus on different specific topics.

And the final consideration for the SET is that we will contact all the CERT AC s and encourage them to have their CERT teams participate at some level in this SET. Previously the SET were radio-focused and did not ask the CERT groups to have strong participation. This time we would like as many CERT areas as possible to stand up an operational ICP, and also use FRS/GMRS radios in their neighborhoods to work in coordination with the ham radio net.

Equipment & Infrastructure

No major developments here, but a number of efforts moving toward being active. First is the acquisition of CERT ID cards which will allow hams to enter the EC EOC in an emergency and open up and operate the emergency communication system at City Hall. Chief Janes is working to get us an appointment for this. Then KCC building in Kensington will be reopened for community use in late Feb or early March, and at that point KE will reinstall the radio, reconnect to the roof-mounted antenna and explore making some changes to allow exterior access to the antenna, as exist now at Harding and Tassajara Parks in EC. These exterior access points will allow us to use portable gear to operate outside if access to the building is not viable in the emergency situation.

Jerry has reminded us of the need for developing a regular maintenance schedule for the installed radios at various public sites. Creating a roster for this maintenance – as Howdy has done for net Control – is a good way to build a deeper bench and to acquaint more of us with the location and operating situation of these radios. We also may check to see if we can or should add the EC Fire Station radios to this list.

Meeting adjourned – 9PM